

## INFORMATION PAPER

### **SUBJECT: Political Do's and Don'ts for DOD Civilian Employees**

1. **PURPOSE.** To explain permissible and impermissible political activities by DOD civilian employees.

2. **EXAMPLES OF PERMISSIBLE POLITICAL ACTIVITY.** A DOD civilian employee (except PAS and SES officials) may—

**a. Participate in the following political organization activities:**

- ✓ Being a member and officer of a political party or partisan group;
- ✓ Attending and participating in a political convention, caucus, or rally; and
- ✓ Serving as a delegate to a political party convention.

**b. Take an active part in a political campaign, which includes:**

- ✓ Displaying a political sign, sticker, button, or similar material, but not while on duty, in a Government office or building, or using a Government vehicle;
- ✓ Initiating or circulating a partisan nominating petition;
- ✓ Canvassing for votes;
- ✓ Endorsing or opposing a candidate in a political advertisement, broadcast, or campaign literature;
- ✓ Addressing a political convention, caucus, or rally on behalf of a candidate;
- ✓ Managing a political campaign;
- ✓ Displaying a political bumper sticker on his/her private vehicle; and
- ✓ Distributing campaign literature off-post.

**c. Participate in the following election-related activities:**

- ✓ Voting;
- ✓ Acting as a recorder, watcher, or challenger at a polling place;
- ✓ Serving as an election judge or clerk;

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- ✓ Driving voters to a polling place; and
- ✓ Running for non-partisan office (that is, an office to which political parties may not designate candidates). Employees who run for non-partisan office may not seek the endorsement of a political party or print partisan campaign literature.

**d. Participate in the following political fundraising activities:**

- ✓ Making a financial political contribution subject to the limitations in 2 U.S.C. §441a and 18 U.S.C. §607.
- ✓ Attending, addressing, or being a featured guest at a political fundraiser (but cannot solicit contributions)[Invitations to a fundraiser may list employees as guests or speakers but may not include their official titles];
- ✓ Soliciting or receiving uncompensated volunteer services (except from subordinates or anyone with official matters before DOD); and
- ✓ Managing or organizing a political fundraiser hosted or sponsored by others (but may not host/sponsor a fundraiser or personally solicit contributions).

**e. Use work email to discuss political subjects in a manner similar to water-cooler conversations.** However, you may not use work email to send messages to a high number of people with whom you have a minimal relationship for the purpose of encouraging the recipients to support or oppose a candidate, political party, or partisan group.

**3. EXAMPLES OF PROHIBITED POLITICAL ACTIVITIES.** A DOD civilian employee will not—

**a. Use his/her official authority or influence to interfere with or affect the result of an election, which includes:**

- ✓ Using his/her official title while participating in a permitted political activity;
- ✓ Using his/her authority to coerce anyone into participating in a political activity;
- ✓ Soliciting or receiving uncompensated volunteer services from a subordinate; and
- ✓ Soliciting or discouraging the participation in a political activity of anyone with official matters before DOD.

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**b. Participate in the following political fundraising activities:**

- ✓ Soliciting, accepting, or receiving political contributions;
- ✓ Allowing the use of your official title in relation to political fundraising; and
- ✓ Hosting or sponsoring a political fundraiser.

**c. Run for partisan office.**

**d. Engage in political activity while on duty, while in any government office or building, while wearing an official uniform, or while using a government vehicle.**

4. **CONCLUSION.** Under the Hatch Act, related statutes, and implementing regulations, DOD civilian employees are subject to certain rules that limit their participation in political activities. They must take care that such participation does not create a real or apparent conflict of interest with the full and impartial performance of their official duties. This information paper, due to space limitations, is not intended to be an all inclusive list of the do's and don'ts. For example, there are other rules applicable to PAS and SES officials. Any questions may be referred to the Ethics Counselor at 221-2373/0485.